

Graduate Entrance Examinations in Music Theory and Musicianship
School of Music
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

(updated Summer 2020)

The **Graduate Entrance Exams in Music Theory and Musicianship** are required of all entering graduate students, with the exception of those in Music Education or the Artist Diploma. These exams are offered at the beginning of every semester. Students may retake the theory portion of the exam in January 2021 if they do not pass. After that, any deficiencies in Part 1 or Part 2 must be remedied by coursework. The score reading portion of the exam may be retaken as many times as necessary and is offered at the beginning of every semester.

Music 502A (Graduate Review of Tonal Music) will be offered in Fall 2020 and Music 502B (Graduate Review of 20th-Century Music) will be offered in Spring 2021; however, you must test out of or take 502A before enrolling in 502B. The three-hour theory entrance exam consists of the three parts outlined below. Some suggested study materials for each part are also provided.

You must pass all three parts of the theory exam and the musicianship exam before you can graduate. To take any upper-level theory coursework required for your degree, you must first have either passed the relevant section of this exam or taken the relevant review course. If you do not pass this exam the first time, you are responsible for retaking it when it is offered as regularly scheduled at the beginning of the following semester. We do not administer make-up or individual exams.

Part I: Common Practice Tonal Music (Writing and Analysis)

You will be asked to harmonize a melody or figured bass involving basic rules of four-part chorale writing, chromatic harmonies (including applied or secondary chords, borrowed chords or modal mixture, the Neapolitan, and augmented sixth chords), and modulation to closely related keys.

You will also be asked to analyze a short piece from the 19th century (e.g., by a composer such as Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Brahms, etc.) or given excerpts from several such pieces. Questions may involve phrase structure, Roman numeral analysis of chromatic harmony, modulation techniques, and form.

You should also be familiar with the typical forms of common practice music, including binary and ternary forms, rondo, and sonata.

Students who do not pass this section of the exam will need to take MUS 502A.

Recommended study materials:

Jane Piper Clendinning and Elizabeth West Marvin, *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*

Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne, *Tonal Harmony*

Steven G. Laitz, *The Complete Musician*

Steven G. Laitz, *Graduate Review of Tonal Theory*

Any one of these is a good source to use in preparation for the exam.

Part II: Twentieth-Century Music (Writing and Analysis)

You will be asked several short questions about common pitch materials in early 20th-century music (e.g., modes, pentatonic, whole tone, and octatonic scales, etc.; basic set theory [such as finding the prime form of a pitch class set and using it in analysis]; and the basic techniques of using a twelve-tone row).

You will also be asked to analyze two short excerpts from pieces from the first half of the twentieth century using the materials outlined above. One excerpt will involve basic techniques of set theory or serialism (e.g., Schönberg, Webern, Berg, etc.) The other will involve early 20th-century approaches to tonality (e.g., Debussy, Stravinsky, Bartók, etc.) Questions may also involve early 20th-century approaches to rhythm and texture.

Students who do not pass this section of the exam will need to take MUS 502B (passing part I of this test or taking MUS 502A is a prerequisite for taking MUS 502B).

Recommended study materials:

Stefan Kostka, *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music*

Joel Lester, *Analytic Approaches to Twentieth-Century Music*

Miguel Roig-Francoli, *Understanding Post-Tonal Music*

Any one of these is a good source to use in preparation for the exam.

Part III: Score Reading

You will be asked to transcribe short excerpts from alto and tenor clef to treble or bass clef and to transcribe short excerpts from the written pitch of standard orchestral transposing instruments (e.g., clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, etc.) to the sounding pitch.

The **Graduate Entrance Exam in Musicianship** is also required of all entering graduate students, with the exception of those in Music Education and the Artist Diploma. It is offered at the beginning of every semester, and we do not administer make-up or individual exams. Students may take the aural skills exam as many times as necessary. Deficiencies in aural skills may also be remedied by successfully completing Music 108G, which will be offered in both Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. The one-hour aural skills exam consists of:

- 1) Recognizing and writing intervals.
- 2) Recognizing and writing chord qualities (triads and seventh chords, including inversions).
- 3) A short two-part melodic dictation.
- 4) A short harmonic dictation, requiring outer voices and Roman numerals and using diatonic harmonies and applied (or secondary) chords.
- 5) A short rhythmic dictation.

Recommended study materials:

musictheory.net

Michael Horvit, Timothy Koozin, and Robert Nelson, *Music for Ear Training* (CD-ROM and workbook)

Auralia 4 software

Any of these is a good source to use in preparation for the exam.